



Lawn Mower Hazards

The mower is a cutting machine designed to trim grass but has the potential to cut anything that is placed in its path. The cutting edge of the mower blade can travel at speeds of up to 200 miles per hour. Even a dull blade at that speed can slice fingers and toes that get in its way.

Other materials, such as toys, stones, sticks, and equipment parts, can become projectiles when struck by the blade. These items, too, can travel up to 200 miles per hour as they leave the discharge chute. Items thrown from mowers can cause serious injury to other people in the area or to the operator when there is no rear guard. Thrown items also can cause property damage.

In addition to cutting and projectile dangers, mowers also can cause burns. The muffler and cylinder head heat up during operation, and remain hot for some time after the engine has been turned off.

Fuel is another danger. Most mowers are powered by gasoline-driven combustion engines. Gasoline is a very explosive and flammable material that should be treated with respect. One gallon of gasoline combined with the correct amount of air is equivalent to 83 pounds of dynamite. Gasoline is flammable because it vaporizes with air to form a mixture that ignites easily. Vaporization can occur in temperatures as low as zero degrees.

Safe practices

- 1. Prepare lawn for mowing.** Every time before you mow, check your lawn for items such as sticks, rocks, toys, sports equipment, dog bones, wire, and equipment parts. Make sure miscellaneous items are not hidden in tall grass. Also look for and remember immovable objects, such as pipes, or partially buried rocks. Running into a fixed object can shatter the blade and throw jagged chunks of metal out the discharge chute or under the housing.
- 2. Handle fuel with care.** Always use care when filling the tank with gasoline. Wipe up spills. Never fill the tank on a mower that has been operating and is hot. Vapors from the gasoline can be ignited by a hot muffler.
- 3. Wear appropriate clothes.** Close-fitting clothes are less likely to get caught on controls or moving parts. Long pants and sturdy leather shoes protect you from flying sticks, stones, or other items not caught by the rear guard. Shoes also should provide good traction. A canvas or open toed shoe cannot protect your foot if it slips into the blade. When mowing for long periods of time or if noise is objectionable, wear hearing protection such as earplugs.